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ABSTRACT

Described are the development and evolution of a program using hospitalized emotionally disturbed adolescents as tutors for hospitalized elementary students. Noted is the program's beginning when one adolescent worked with a recreation staff member in the elementary program. Reviewed are such program aspects as tutor and tutee selection and program maintenance. Examples of successful and unsuccessful tutors are included. (CL)

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The Use of Hospitalized Adolescents as Tutors for Hospitalized Children in a Residential Treatment Setting

The Children's Psychiatric Institute (CPI) is the psychiatric facility for children and adolescents hospitalized at John Umstead Hospital or receiving treatment through the facility's day care program. CPI's educational department maintains two twelve month schools which will be referred to in this paper: Pine Valley is the elemetary school serving twenty four children, ages five through twelve, and Bowling Green is the junior/senior high school enrolling an average of sixty adolescents at any given time. I am the principal of that school.

This paper describes a project initially undertaken in 1972 to determine the effectiveness of utilizing the emotionally disturbed adolescent students of Bowling Green School as tutors for the elementary students of Pine Valley School. The program had its problems at the beginning which threatned its very existence. This paper will examine those problems, trace the process of developing an efficacious program, state the rationale for the program, and present several case illustrations. By way of further introducing the topic, I would like to give a brief review of the literature.

Peer and cross-age tutoring are growing practices in the public schools. Not an innovation in education, students helping other students was a common, necessary technique in the one room school house of the United States with the younger or less knowledgable child benefiting from the expertise of his more learned peer.

The practice, however, is older than frontier America and was known in England a century earlier as the "Monitorial System". The

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most widely known exponent of what came to be called the "monitorial system" was Joseph Lancaster, an English Quaker. Because he did not have the money to hire teachers to help him run the school he opened in 1798 for poor children, he was forced to utilize the children themselves as teachers. His book, Improvements in Education, published in 1806, documented the positive results achieved through this "spontaneous experiment".Similar ideas were developed by Andrew Bell, a rival of Lancaster's at the same period.

The ideas of Lancaster and Bell eventually fell into disrepute. Utilizing the students themselves as teachers was extremely economical, and once the focus shifted from the positive, cognitive effects of the monitorial-tutorial system to the economic advantages, the implementation of this powerful idea became mechanized. Quality was replaced by quantity, and evaluation was unimportant. There was eventually a public outcry; and, as a greater supply of professional teachers became available, the monitorial system was no longer necessary.

It was not until the early 60's that the practice of using students to teach other students was revived. In a pilot project at the University of Michigan Laboratory Schools, Lippitts and Lobman (1965) used older elementary and junior high school students to work with younger elementary grade children. They focused their work on the process of socialization among the students receiving tutoring rather than on any academic objectives.

At the same time as the Lippitts began their work in the Detroit Public Schools and the University Laboratory School, Mobilization for Youth, New York City, which was one of the initial projects established by the anti-delinquent efforts of the Kennedy administration, undertook a program

in which older children tutored younger ones in an after-school effort. Cloward (1967) described the nine tutorial centers established in neighborhood elementary schools of New York City and in his article pointed out that the emphasis was on the cognitive improvements of the tutee, especially reading achievement.

Following these initial projects, each with a somewhat different goal in benefits for the tutee, there has been enormous growth in peer and cross-age tutoring. At first, these programs adhered primarily to the objectives of Cloward's program, with emphasis on the gains in academic skills made by the tutee. Recently a number of writers have suggested the use of tutoring programs as a way to enhance the learning of the tutors as well as tutees. In their review of tutoring programs in the United States, Gartner, Kohler, and Riesman (1971) stated, "Every child must be given the opportunity to play the teaching role, because it is through this role that he may really learn how to learn." (p. 134) In summarizing the benefits for the tutor, Gartner et al, categorized these benefits as either 1) cognitive or 2) social-emotional. Regarding the emotional benefits, the authors wrote:

> The most direct effect is related to building the self-respect of the tutors. The facets of building this include: (1) the factor of being singled out, especially chosen; (2) doing an important activity; (3) developing competence. (p. 284)

Numerous studies have described tutoring programs that benefitted the tutor in the area of cognitive development. Many studies focused on the improvement of reading and all reported gains for both the tutor and tutee, with the tutor making the more significant strides. (Bremmer, 1972; Frager and Stern, 1973; Hassett, 1974; Hassinger and Via, 1969; Kopp, 1972;

Landrum and Martin, 1969; Van Wessen, 1967).

Other authors (Kopp, 1972; Mohan, 1973; Thelen, 1968) described programs which have been concerned primarily with the tutor's social/emotional development. Thelen listed fifteen benefits from such a tutoring program. Some directly aiding in the affective growth of the tutor were seen as follows:

> 1) enhancing the ego development and self-esteem of the tutors by providing a success experience and a feeling of being wanted. 2) giving youngsters a chance to practice the adult role of teacher and to visualize the possibility that there may be a place for them in a productive society. 3) using the tutorial activity as a possible way to develop the tutor's own insight into the teaching-learning process so that he can cooperate more effectively with his own teachers in meaningful activities. (p. 85)

Although the literature is replete with reports of successful tutoring programs in the public schools, my search revealed little in the way of implementing this growing practice with emotionally disturbed children or adolescents. I was able to locate three studies in which "normal" adolescents were used as helpers in special education or recreation projects, one program employing socially disadvantaged adolescents as teacher aides for children, and one paper describing the use of hospitalized adolescents as teacher assistants in an elementary classroom in a psychiatric setting. Despite the fact that studies of public school tutoring programs have documented positive changes in the behavior and self-image of the tutor and despite the universality of poor self-esteem in disturbed youth, the literature had no record of any cross-age tutoring project involving emotionally disturbed youth which was undertaken to build the disturbed

youngster's self concept.

The study most closely related to the program at C.P.I. was conducted at the Neurospsychiatric Institute (NPI) of the University of California, Los Angeles. The N.P.I. school serves some fifty children and adolescents in residential treatment. Two teachers, Donald Mayhew and Juanita Ferjo, directed a two year project which assigned adolescent students as teacher assistants to work with younger children in an N.P.I. classroom.

Although Mayhew and Ferjo's study dealt with a population comparable to the one of this study, the objectives of the projects were different in several respects. First, the N.P.I. program utilized adolescents as tutors because of their ability to communicate and establish rapport with younger children "over and above the skills of the teachers." This communication was seen to enhance the learning of the child. As a secondary benefit of the program, according to the authors, the adolescent derived insight into his own coping mechanisms because he had been paired with a child whose emotional disturbance paralleled his own.

In the C.P.I. tutoring program, no attempt was made to join adolescent and child by commonality of problems. The CPI project was essentially established to provide for the adolescent tutor another method for developing self-esteem through a school-related modality. Being both a teacher and a younger student for what he could give was interperted by the troubled adolescent as an implicit statement of his worth.

The following assumptions serve as the rationale for the C.P.I. Tutoring Project:

1. The emotionally disturbed adolescent had years of negative school experience and needs situations which address and develop his strengths.

2. The opportunity to help another person will enhance the ego

development and self-esteem of the adolescent by providing a success experience and a feeling of being wanted.

3. Issues of autonomy and independence are developmental concerns of adolescents who need chances to practice adult roles and take on additional responsibilities.

4. There is a bulk of literature and research which supports the supposition that tutoring builds self-esteem in the tutor.

It was further postulated that there would be a positive effect on the adolescent's behavior and learning in his own school performance as a result of his work as a tutor. That is, improvement in self-control and academic performance would be a correlate of improvement in self-esteem. As the program was initially established, tutoring was defined as one person helping another person; therefore, a program which placed an adolescent in any helping role with a younger child was construed as cross-age tutoring.

In June, 1972, the first attempt at such a program was begun; a sixteen year old boy in treatment on the Adolescent Unit became an assistant to a recreator at the Children's Unit. After gaining the recreator and CPU's agreement to "give it a try", the staffs of Bowling Green School and the Adolescent Unit selected Paul. Paul was chosen because he was to be discharged from the program in two months, was active in athletics, and needed a concrete bolster to his self-esteem. His parents, through the course of family therapy, had come to express their rejection of him with threats even of "unadopting him", and Paul had been working through (and still was working through) the feelings of never returning home. Post-discharge plans were for him to attend a boarding school and to visit his home on scheduled holidays. When I approched him about working with the children in recreation, I stated that we did not have the means to pay him for his work but that we thought he could contribute a needed service

and maybe feel good about doing that. He was also told that the job entailed utilizing the strengths he had gained while in treatment, i.e. not giving in to feelings and making himself go through the motions of work even when he "didn't feel like it."

The problem lay in not communication all of this directly and emphatically to the Children's Unit staff. In my enthusiastic attempt to get their support of this pilot project, I tended to gloss over what treatment benefits there were for Paul as well as what possible difficulties he would bring to the arrangement. Rather, I focused on his imminent discharge (Parenthetically, "You have a healthy boy on your hands"), his experience with younger kids at camp and at the Y.M.C.A., and on his skill and interests in sports. Recreation staff and I agreed to meet on a P.R.N. basis and to communicate by phone once a week. This I call Mistake #2.

For the most part, the summer arrangement worked well and Paul met his responsibilities. His job was to help the recreator in a planned sports activity for all the boys three times a week. He was occasionally late or had to be cajoled into going. At those times he talked of not feeling like going but said that knowing the children were counting on him would make him go anyhow. On those days, he always returned from tutoring looking and feeling better about himself that when he left.

There was, however, a week in late July when his parents went on vacation without including him that many of Paul's ego skills caved in. He became depressed and irritable and refused to attend summer school classes, therapy, and, of course, his tutoring job. Fumbles to explain why Paul could not mobilize himself and profuse apologizes for his absences filled the "P.R.N. collaboration" time I had with the recreator. The following week his parents returned from their trip and Paul returned to his daily schedule. But for

the remainder of the summer I felt defensive toward the Children's Unit, apprehensive over whether or not Paul would falter again, angry at him for making me and my visionary project look bad, and furious with the recreators for expecting too much from Paul when he acted like a"normal" emotionally disturbed adolescent.

On the positive side, the overall summer experience was a very meaningful one for Paul. He remarked several times that it made him feel good to know that the children depended on him and that he felt even better about his work on days when he had forced himself to go. On a questionaire I administered this spring to all the adolescents who have participated in the tutoring program in the past five years, Paul answered thoughtfully to the question, "Do you think you benefitted from the tutoring experience"? He wrote, "I felt a sense of pride to see a child find a skill he never used before. I saw the sparkle of accomplishment in his eyes. I felt in some small way maybe I helped make that child a more rounded person."

Paul was discharged according to plans in August and it was both timely and unavoidable to evaluate the project's "trial balloon". The C.P.U. staff openly acknowledged their frustration over never knowing exactly whether or not Paul would show up and their frustration at often being unabel to reach me when a problem arose. They also noted that Paul worked very responsibly and sensitively with the children and staff, and stated that they were willing to work with more adolescents if the problems could be ironed out.

At a subsequent meeting with the CPU staff and Pine Valley School teachers, the intent of the tutoring program was outlined in an attempt to gain their endorsement. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the adolescent tutor was disturbed, just as the elementary school child of Pine Valley was disturbed. The staff was being essentially asked, I explained, to voluntarily

participate in the treatment of the adolescent, i.e. allow him the opportunity to work as a tutor in an effort to build his self-image. Clarification of this issue was a cardinal point if the tutoring program were to succeed. The staff - recreators, teachers, whoever who would be involved in the project - needed to be aware that they were not getting an assistant, an aide, nor a volunteer who would free them for an hour or so a week from the responsibility of working with a child. Rather, they were told that this would be a time-consuming task, as they, not the Adolescent Unit nor Bowling Green staffs, would be responsible for working out the plans and supervision of the adolescent tutor. Further, the staff member would have to live with his own anxiety and fears concerning what the adolescent could really accomplish - or destory - with one of his own charges.

By far, the most essential point stated and reiterated at the meeting was that the adolescent tutor himself was disturbed and that there could be no guarantee that his own problems would not sometimes interfere with his ability to deliver quality service as a tutor. The staff was cautioned that there might be a time when the adolescent, angry about an incident occurring on the ward or in his own school, might refuse to attend tutoring in an attempt to get back at all adults and at "the establishment". The adolescent might conceivably become involved in an activity on his ward with high appeal and "forget" to meet his tutee, thus immaturely and irresponsibly gratifying his own needs of the moment. Moody and unpredictable, the adolescent tutor might on some occasions be receptive to criticism and suggestions, while resentful and belligerent on other days.

All of this was stated — not because it would happen — but because it could happen. Based on the past summer's experience, I thought it wiser to err on the side of forewarned calamity that to project a picture of

unmitigated success.

The second problem addressed was that of staff collaboration. The "catch as catch can" method had been haphazard at best and also resulted in both staffs storing up feelings rather than sharing them and working together toward constructive resolution. It was decided that a designated meeting time be established each week with the CPU supervisor of the adolescent's work and with me with the purpose of exchanging information, resolving problems, and evaluating the program's effectiveness and most importantly allowing me a forum for"feeding", supporting the staff working with the adolescent.

Deciding on which facet of the CPU program in which to concentrate the tutoring was another issue resolved. Much of the staff of CPU, as well as most adults in general, were wary of contact with adolescents whom they feared to be stubbornly headstrong, defiant, aggressive, and intimidating. To gain the acceptance of the staff for continuing the tutoring program - especially after the rough summer - required the utmost in mutual trust, openness, and cooperation. It was felt that this would be easier accomlished between staffs who already knew each other and who shared similiar training backgrounds, objectives, and ways of conceptualizing emotional disturbance. Hence, it was decided that Pine Valley School would be both the staff and place where the tutoring would occur in the future. The decision to locate the program exclusively in the school was based on more reasons than that the elementary teachers were already a known quantity to the teachers and administration of Bowling Green School. Confining tutoring to the school format was done for several reasons:

1. It provided the structure necessary for both the tutor and tutee.
2. It afforded prestige and increased self-respect for the adolescent

who was singled out for a job as a student teacher.

3. Autonomy and independence could be facilitated as the adolescent tutored in a situation independent of the classroom group. Having the responsibility for carrying out lesson plans (and ultimately developing his own materials) and for making decisions without the teacher being present would provide a concrete means of reinforcing the adolescent's initiative and independent thinking.

4. Tutoring one child promoted by a large measure the development of the child's positive, dependent relationship on the tutor, thus making him feel needed and worthwhile.

5. Often lacking in many basic skills himself, the adolescent who was embarrassed to go back and learn "baby stuff" as a 9th grader, for example, would perhaps learn those skills through a less threatening modality, i.e. in the name of teaching them to a child.

As implemented in the fall of 1972, the current C.P.I. tutoring program involves selected adolescents working for two half an hour, one-to-one sessions per week with selected children. Tutoring occurs in the elementary school library (with the librarian nearby) at a time when the child is not otherwise in class and is used as a supplement to the regular classroom instruction.

The choice of the children to receive tutoring is made by the Pine Valley teacher who has volunteered to take on an adolescent tutor and by the head teacher of Pine Valley School.

Schizophrenic, autistic, or severely aggressive children are not considered appropriate candidates for tutoring for several reasons: (1) These children would be difficult to manage, and the likelihood is that work with them for the adolescent would not produce a success experience. (2) These children are the sickest of those in treatment and, therefore, require the most highly trained people to tutor and work with them. (3) These children require as much consistency in program and personnel as possible. Exposure to another new person twice a week could be counterproductive. (4) The bizarre and unpredictable nature of these children would be highly threatening

for the disturbed adolescent whose own system of control is tenuous at best.

In summary, the children to be tutored are selected because (1) they need supplemental instruction in developing adequate reading skills; (2) they are healthy enough to tolerate another person working with them, and at worse, a person who might be somewhat unpredictable in his own performance; (3) they are amenable to treatment and remedial intervention, which means that they could benefit from tutoring and hence provide a feeling of success for the tutor.

The selection of tutors is assigned to the teachers of Bowling Green. The criteria for selection of candidates include the following: (1) Students who are meeting their present responsibilities - attending classes regularly and on time, participating in class - however marginally, following rules on the ward and in recreational activities; (2) students who are not achieving on grade level because of their poor reading skills, sensitivity to authority figures, and/or anxiety over performance; (3) students who have not been signaled out in any other special way (having a ward job, making the Honor Roll, being the star of the basketball team, etc); and (4) students whose self-esteem can rise from being given the tutoring position and the additional responsibilities.

It is no easy task for thirteen teachers to agree upon two or three students from a group of sixty, most of whom meet at least three out of the four criteria. Teachers advocate for the students they know and feel will most likely benefit from the honor of being selected. Considering the phenomenon that not every student--despite his neediness and low self-esteem--is able to handle consistently the additional responsibility of putting aside his own conflicts to do a tutoring job helps to narrow the choice of candidates. However, after this selection is accomplished I take the recommendation.

to the elementary school teachers involved in the program. A description of each adolescent is given along with the rationale for his selection. No attempt is made to gloss over the adolescent's problems nor to "sell" him as a tutor. The teacher then meets the student and then reject or "hires" him. After this is done, I approach the student with the "job offer". Typically adolescent, he usually maintains a pseudo-indifference, and we agree that he is to "think about it" and make a decision by the afternoon. Interestingly, the news of this offer spreads very quickly, and by midday there have usually been five or six others knocking at my door to "see about a tutoring job like Robert." After the student returns to accept the job (and he always does) I arrange an appointment for him to meet his supervising teacher.

The implementation and maintenance of an effective cross-age tutoring program involves on-going and coordinated supervision by the teacher of the work of the tutor. Not only necessary from the point of view of overseeing the tutor's skills with the tutee, on-going supervision also serves as a built-in mechanism for providing structure. In order to function maximally the disturbed student demands structure and a highly predictable enviornment where expectations and consequences are clearly and consistently delineated. Providing this structure in the tutoring program is seen as mandatory. Therefore, at the first meeting of the tutor and his supervising teacher, the teacher gives the tutor the necessary information about the child he is to work with. The child's academic strengths and weaknessess are presented and the goals to be reached through individual tutoring are spelled out precisely, e.g."Amy has trouble saying the sounds of the vowels in words. What you will be doing with her is improving her skills in recognizing vowels."

At this initial meeting on-going procedures for the tutoring are clearly spelled out to the tutor. These procedures include the following:

(1) For each tutoring session the supervising teacher leaves an assignment sheet and the needed material in a box marked "Tutor" which remains in the Pine Valley School library. The tutor is expected to arrive fifteen minutes before the acutal tutoring session so that he can review the materials. Only the assignments for that particular session are left in the box.

(2) Tutoring occurs in the school library at a table designated by the librarian. The child care staff of the Children's Unit has the responsibility for seeing to it that the child arrives on time to the library where his tutor waits for him.

(3) The sessions last for thirty minutes and occur twice a week. As the tutor and tutee complete each assignment written on the assignment sheet, the tutor checks off the assignment and makes small notations regarding how difficult or easy its completion was for the child. At the end of each session, all materials and the assignment sheet with written feedback to the teacher are returned to the "Tutor" box.

(4) The tutor and supervising teacher meet for half an hour once a week to review the week's progress and to make plans for the following week. This session is also used to support the tutor for his performance and to elicit his ideas for further work with the child.

(5) Termination of tutoring occurs at the end of the school semester and its renewal is negotiable. The adolescent is told he has to tutor for a semester and must agree to that.

Over the past four years, nine adolescents have worked as tutors. Two have assisted in summer classroom activity groups, one worked with a

teacher in a photography class, and another assisted a teacher in an art class. The remainder worked as one-to-one tutors. Progress notes written from school, ward and therapy documented positive changes - however temporary - in the adolescent's behavior during the time he worked as a tutor.

A major exception to this was 17½ year old Betty, who had been a high achiever in school prior to her admission to the Adolescent Unit, although there was escalating acting out in the family. During her first six months of treatment she was in a "honeymoon phase," and it was at this point that a tutoring job was offered to her. Unfortunately but predicably this phase soon waned. Adolescent Unit staff and I often were incredulous when we heard how responsible and mature she was in her tutoring when we had been dealing with her outrageous acting out in the milieu. It seemed as though in her tutoring job she rose to the situation that demanded her best - and that demanded it only three times a week for thirty minutes. The fact that tutoring occurred off the premise of Bowling Green and that it represented a nonpathological sphere for her undoubtedly contributed to her self-control there. In response to the question, "Do you think you benefitted from tutoring?", she answered, "I felt that someone needed me and returned my love; it gave me experience working with children. It also helped me to feel more integrated with the world outside the Adolescent Unit. I found that working with children was what I liked to do more than anything."

The only time we erred horrendously in our selection of an appropriate tutor was with Joe, a 16 year old boy who had been a patient on an adult ward of the hospital (not the Adolescent Unit) for three months and had attended classes at Bowling Green for that period. Teachers observed that he was non-assertive in the classroom but was responsible in his school work and dimonstrated a keen intellect. (He later became a National Merit Semi-finalist).

At approximately the same time he was offered a tutoring job, he was transferred to the Adolescent Unit for long-term treatment. He started out his tutoring by being involved and responsible, but within a month his behavior in school and on the Unit was in decline. He often refused to get up for classes and meals and often missed his tutoring sessions. Several weeks later, he declared his intentions of quitting his job and no amount of talk could encourage him otherwise. It appeared that placement on the Adolescent Unit represented a haven for Joe and a place where he could experience a necessary regression. Tutoring at that time was incongruent with his need for entrenchment; furthermore, grappling with the responsibilities of being a tutor when he was unable to deliver made him feel worse about himself. As an illustration of the solid investment the Pine Valley staff had in the tutoring program by that time, it is worth sharing that their primary reaction was "Well, we'll need to get another tutor for Mike since Joe has stopped."

A final case vignette is 14 year old Robert, who only started tutoring six months ago. Painfully behind in his reading and writing skills, he has developed many compensatory devices for survival. Because his self-esteem is so shakey and his ability to trust so fragile, some - but not enough - headway had been made by his teachers at Bowling Green to remediate his deficits. He was given the tutoring job working with a 5 year old boy. The goal was to build his self-esteem with the hope that he would learn and reading skills through our indirect method. Very pleased with himself and his work for the first two sessions, Robert came to me after the third one with the announcement that I should get somebody else to do the job because he was "not cut out to be a teacher." Though he let me say that I wondered if someone had hurt his feelings, he could not elaborate on his reasons and

merely reiterated that he wanted to quit. He was finally told by me that he had to work it out with Mrs. Kane, his supervising teacher, and he left of find her. A quick phone call alerted her to my feeling that Robert had felt more threatened that I had reckoned for when he had to read aloud to his child and work with him on skills he still had not totally mastered. That was all it took and in twenty minutes, a beaming Robert returned to me stating, "It's all settled, me and Mrs. Kane worked it out." It seems that she had told Robert she did not want any of his friends as tutors and only wanted him. She went on to explain that Scottie, the child, really needed practicing in writing his letters and that was the area she was expecting Robert to work in.

Last week I told Robert I was working with Vocational Rehabilation to see if they could give salaries for our tutor jobs. He swaggered and said, "Naw, I don't want to get paid for this. It's something good you do and you don't need money when you feel good."

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